

United Way Tax Policy Forum and Hill Day

At Home Advocacy Toolkit for EITC

On June 13th, United Way advocates will storm Capitol Hill to advocate for key tax priorities including expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for workers not raising kids at home and young people ages 21 to 24. While the EITC is one of the most effective tools we have to help working families keep their heads above water, it currently excludes millions of workers. In fact, more than 5 million American workers are taxed into poverty, largely because they are excluded from the pro-work, anti-poverty impacts of the EITC.

Let's amplify our impact on June 13th by:

- Inviting supporters to advocate with us through our [call to action link](#)
- Educating the public and lawmakers about the critical impact of EITC and
- Leveraging the momentum and lift of our colleagues advocating for this issue on the Hill

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Part 1: DIGITAL ADVOCACY

Pair the graphics below with social media posts on EITC. Encourage advocates to send a message to their Members of Congress by sharing our call to action link via email and/or social media. Feel free to customize any of the sample social media with local information or stories. State by state data can be found starting on page 9.

[Download full size graphics from this link](#)



Sample Email to Supporters

Today **United Way of _____** is joining advocates from around the country to expand one of the most powerful tools we have to promote work and fight poverty. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) lifts about **6 million Americans** out of poverty annually by providing a tax credit for families and people in our community who work, but still struggle to make ends meet.

The EITC helps about **[25 million /XX thousand*]** working **[Americans/STATE-ians]** afford the basic necessities, such as being able to get to work on time and making sure there is food on the table. It allows returning veterans, farm workers, home health aides, teaching assistants, janitors, cashiers and other low-wage workers to keep more of their hard-earned income.

Yet, lower-income working Americans not raising children at home or young people just starting out have little to no access to the EITC. We're fighting to fix that.

Will you join us?

[Send a message to your representative now: Expand the EITC.](#)

The Earned Income Tax Credit is essential in United Way's fight for the financial stability of every person in [every community/STATE/COMMUNITY].

The EITC keeps people working, like James from Maryland. James and his wife had recently welcomed their first child, but even though James worked two part-time jobs, they struggled to make ends meet. With a busy schedule and a limited paycheck, James was forced to ride a bike to school, his internship, work and the grocery store, often pedaling home to his family at 7:00 or 8:00 at night. Thanks to the EITC, James was able to save up enough money to buy a car to take care of his family's needs. [OR insert story from your community instead of James' story]

Send a message right now to urge your member of Congress to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit so that more workers like James [OR LOCAL FAMILY] get the tax credits they deserve.

Thanks for taking action.

*Find state by state numbers on page 9

Sample Social Media

Hashtags to Use: #ExpandEITC #EITCworks #UWAdvocate

Tips

- Please be sure the use #UWAdvocate and either #ExpandEITC or #EITCworks
- Please share either the [online call to action](#) or the [share your story](#) link.
- Access United Way branded social media graphics in this [OneDrive folder](#).
- Find state specific data to use in social media messages starting on page 9
- If you're attending the Tax Policy Forum, don't forget to also post thanks to the elected officials you meet with during the Hill Day! They love pictures and social media shout outs!
 - **Sample message:** Thanks [@MemberOfCongress] for meeting with our team today to talk about EITC, VITA, and charitable giving incentives! We look forward to continuing to work with your office this Congress. #UWAdvocate [include a picture]

Sample Posts – Twitter

- Advocates from @UnitedWay are on Capitol Hill today telling Congress to #ExpandEITC to help workers keep more of what they earn. Join us! #UWAdvocate <http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>
- More than 55 @UnitedWay advocates from all over the country are advocating on Capitol Hill today to #ExpandEITC. Join us! #UWAdvocate <http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>
- The EITC helps about [25 million/XX thousand*] working [Americans/STATE-ians] afford the basic necessities, like groceries, rent, transportation, and health care. By expanding the EITC, workers currently excluded will be able to keep more of what they earn. #EITCworks #UWAdvocate <http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>

- We know #EITCworks by promoting work, lifting millions out of poverty and improving child health and academics. Congress should know too. Take action to #ExpandEITC. #UWAdvocate
<http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>
- Congress should #ExpandEITC to help [XXX**] workers in [STATE] put food on the table and gas in the car to get to work. Send an e-mail to your representatives now. #UWAdvocate
<http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>

*Find state by state numbers on page 9

***Find state by state numbers on page 10

Sample Posts – Facebook

- Advocates from @UnitedWay are on Capitol Hill today telling Congress to expand EITC to help workers keep more of what they earn. Join us! <http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>
- More than 55 @UnitedWay advocates from all over the country are advocating on Capitol Hill today to expand EITC for workers not raising children at home and young people just starting out. Join us! <http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>
- The EITC helps about [25 million /XX thousand*] working [Americans/STATE-ians] afford the basic necessities, like groceries, rent, transportation, child care and healthcare. By expanding the EITC, workers currently excluded will be able to keep more of what they earn. <http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>
- We know the EITC works by promoting work, lifting millions out of poverty and improving child health and academics. Congress should know too. Take action to expand EITC for workers not raising children at home and young people just starting out. <http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>
- Congress should expand EITC to help [XXX**] workers in [STATE] put food on the table and gas in the car to get to work. Send an e-mail to your representatives now. <http://unitedway.co/2jXF0t7>

*Find state by state numbers on page 9

***Find state by state numbers on page 10

Sample Posts – Instagram

Tips:

- If you are attending the Tax Policy Forum, consider doing an Instagram Story Takeover to share the first hand look at Capitol Hill Day. You can end the story with the call to action link (<https://unitedway.co/2HL1pol>) and encouraging followers to “Swipe up to learn more!”
 - Consider putting the [call to action link](https://unitedway.co/2HL1pol) (<https://unitedway.co/2HL1pol>) in your bio and using the take action language below. If you do not add the link to your bio, make sure to add it back to the sample text below.
- Advocates from @UnitedWay are on Capitol Hill today telling Congress to #ExpandEITC to help workers keep more of what they earn. Join us by clicking the link in our bio! #UWAdvocate
 - More than 55 @UnitedWay advocates from all over the country are advocating on Capitol Hill today to #ExpandEITC. Join us by clicking the link in our bio! #UWAdvocate

- The EITC helps about [25 million /XX thousand*] working [Americans/STATE-ians] afford the basic necessities, like groceries, rent, transportation, and health care. By expanding the EITC, workers currently excluded will be able to keep more of what they earn. Take action by clicking the link in our bio. #EITCworks #UWAdvocate
- We know #EITCworks by promoting work, lifting millions out of poverty and improving child health and academics. Congress should know too. Take action to #ExpandEITC by clicking the link in our bio. #UWAdvocate
- Congress should #ExpandEITC to help [XXX**] workers in [STATE] put food on the table and gas in the car to get to work. Send an e-mail to your representatives now by clicking the link in our bio. #UWAdvocate

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Blog Post Template

Making Ends Meet Shouldn't Be a Struggle for Working [Americans/STATE-ians]

We all agree that people should work hard, and that should be enough to pay their bills. But the fact is that many low-wage workers don't earn enough to cover basic necessities like groceries, rent, transportation, child care and health care.

[United Way of Anywhere] fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community, which includes advocating for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). This sensible tax credit helps about [25 million/XX thousand*] working [Americans/STATE-ians] keep more of their hard-earned money so they can cover basic expenses without relying on public assistance.

To be eligible for the EITC, recipients have to work. They are home health aides, farm workers, teaching assistants, janitors, cashiers and other low-wage workers. Many recipients are also military families and returning veterans, who rely on the EITC to supplement their transition into the civilian workforce.

The EITC is one of the country's most successful anti-poverty programs, lifting roughly six million people, including three million children, out of poverty each year. By reducing poverty and increasing income for working families, the EITC has been linked to better health — especially for infants and mothers — and better test scores and achievement for students.

Economic boosters like the EITC ensure that average [Americans/STATE-ians] have enough money to keep up the basic spending our economy depends on. For every EITC dollar a recipient earns, they return \$1.50 to \$2.00 to the local economy, paying for basic needs like food or a down payment on a more reliable car to get to work. That's good for everyone in our community.

The business community supports the EITC, and not just because it gives working families more spending power. The EITC increases workforce participation and encourages low-wage workers to get additional education or training to boost their employability by incentivizing them to move up the economic ladder.

[IF AVAILABLE, REPLACE THE PARAGRAPH BELOW WITH A LOCAL STORY OF THE SAME LENGTH]

James of Maryland is a great example. After he and his wife had their first child, they were struggling to make ends meet even though James worked two part-time jobs. With a busy schedule and a limited paycheck, James was forced to ride a bike to school, work, his internship and the grocery store, often pedaling home to his family at 7:00 or 8:00 at night. Thanks to the EITC, James was able to save up enough money to buy a car.

We all agree that people should work hard, and the EITC makes it just a little easier for people like James [OR LOCAL FAMILY] to make ends meet and take care of their families.

But while the EITC is one of the most effective tools we have to help working families keep their heads above water, it currently excludes millions of workers. Workers not raising children at home receive too small a credit to experience a stabilizing effect, and workers 21-24 (not raising children at home) are completely ineligible.

More than 5 million American workers in this group are actually taxed into poverty, largely because they are excluded from the pro-work, anti-poverty impacts of the EITC.

Today, over 55 United Way leaders from around the country are meeting with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to educate them about the incredible impact of the EITC, and to make the case for the credit's expansion.

Please join us, [by emailing your Member of Congress](#) about this important issue.

**Find state by state numbers on page 9*

Part 2: EARNED MEDIA

Earned Media Templates

Op-Ed 1 (Featuring Impact Story)

Word Count: 711

Hard-Working [Americans/STATE-ians] Shouldn't Struggle to Pay Their Bills

[OPTION: REPLACE JAMES' STORY WITH A BRIEF LOCAL STORY OF SOMEONE WHO WAS HELPED BY EITC.]

For millions of Americans like James, working hard isn't always enough to pay the bills. James was holding down two part-time jobs to support his wife and baby, but he just couldn't make ends meet. With a busy schedule and a limited paycheck, the only way James could get to work, his internship, school and the grocery store was on his bike, often pedaling home to his family at 7:00 or 8:00 at night. Thanks to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), James was able to save up enough money to buy a used car, which makes taking care of his family's needs a little bit easier.

In the current economy, many hard-working people with low wages like James [OR LOCAL STORY SUBJECT] can barely keep up with the rising costs of food and rent. The EITC is a sensible tax credit for about [25 million/XX thousand*] working [Americans/STATE-ians] who don't earn enough to pay for basic necessities such as groceries, housing, transportation, child care and health care.

To be eligible for the EITC, recipients have to work — and they do. They are farm workers, home health aides, teaching assistants, janitors, cashiers and small-business owners, and many of them are veterans and military families. When veterans return home, many rely on the EITC to supplement their wages as they make their way back into the civilian workforce.

The EITC lets low-wage workers keep more of their hard-earned money so they can cover basic expenses without relying on public assistance, giving them the opportunity to build a better future for their families. The EITC is a pro-work tool that rewards and incentivizes workers that move up the economic ladder and offers short-term support to families going through a tough time, like a temporary job loss or a cut in hours, so they can stay on their feet. It's an economic booster, too, ensuring that average **Americans/STATE-ians** have enough money to keep up the basic spending our economy depends on.

Over the years, the EITC has proven to be one of the most successful anti-poverty programs in the United States, lifting roughly six million people — including more than three million children — out of poverty each year. In fact, the EITC has kept more children living above the poverty line than any other tax credit program. But it's not just about economics. By reducing poverty and increasing income for working families, the EITC has been linked to better health, especially for infants and mothers. Young children in families that receive the EITC do better on tests and go further in school, including graduating from high school — and, when they become adults, they tend to get better jobs and earn more.

The EITC is not only good for working families. It benefits our entire community. Businesses support the EITC because it helps low-wage employees afford necessities, such as transportation and child care, so they can do their best work at their jobs. The EITC increases workforce participation and encourages low-wage workers to get additional education or training to boost their employability and earning power. What's more, recipients spend the additional earnings they keep as a result of the EITC at businesses in their communities, paying for basic needs like food or a down payment on a more reliable car to get to work. For every EITC dollar recipients earn, they return \$1.50 to \$2.00 to the economy, supporting not only their families but also their communities.

But while the EITC is one of the most effective tools we have to help working families keep their heads above water, it currently excludes millions of workers. Workers not raising children at home receive too small a credit to experience a stabilizing effect, and workers in this group aged 21-24 are completely ineligible. More than 5 million American are actually taxed into poverty, largely because they are excluded from the pro-work, anti-poverty impacts of the EITC.

That's why, on June 13th, our United Way colleagues from across the country are meeting with lawmakers on Capitol Hill, like **Senators 1 and 2, and Representative X** to urge Congress to expand the EITC for millions of working Americans. It's one of the best tools we have to keep people working, which is good for businesses, workers and the entire community.

Find state by state numbers on page **9*

Expand Pro-Work Credit for **STATE** workers

At the United Way of [region], we fight for many women and men who work hard at low-wage jobs yet can barely make ends meet. They find it nearly impossible to cover even essentials such as food, transportation to and from work, and electric bills.

One way we help struggling workers in our community is by connecting them with the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). It's one of our most effective tools to keep people working and help them get a fair shot at a decent life. Just last year, we helped connect [#]¹ individuals and families to the EITC through MyFreeTaxes.com and our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program resulting in [#] coming back to our community.

But the more important—and more concerning—statistic is the number of struggling workers that we can't help because the EITC is largely unavailable to them. Right now, the EITC largely shuts out millions of working Americans who are not raising children at home. For example, noncustodial parents who want to provide more support to their children receive very little from the credit, and young workers aged 21-24, not raising children at home—many of whom are struggling to get a foothold in the workforce—are completely ineligible for the EITC.

Because these workers are largely excluded from the EITC, they are the only group in our country that is taxed into poverty. This situation makes it even harder for workers to pay their bills today and build the financial stability they need to succeed in the future.

Our nation's leaders can solve this problem. Expanding the EITC to include workers not raising children at home would give [#*] working people in [state] the financial stability to cover the basics, build a better future for themselves and their loved ones, and contribute more to our local economy. Studies show that the EITC helps working people buy necessities like food and gas from local businesses, which in turn helps our local economy grow.

At United Way of [region], we know these aren't just numbers. They are real people with real stories. Last year, we helped [insert story here of someone who does not have children]. If [he/she] qualified for the EITC, [NAME] would have received up to \$\$\$\$ tax credit. This extra money could have helped pay for [insert examples].

A stronger EITC would reward the hard work of people like [name] in [community]—young and old, male and female, from every background—who do essential, low-wage jobs in schools and office buildings and on construction sites to keep [state] running.

So, as Sens. **Senators 1 and 2, and Representative X** look for ways to help hardworking Americans in the next year, they should support expanding the EITC for workers not raising children in the home. [NAME OF PERSON IN STORY], workers in [REGION], and working people across the country are counting on them.

**Find state by state numbers on page 10*

¹ If your United Way does not work directly on VITA or MyFreeTaxes.com, you can reference the number of people helped by free tax preparation in your state (page 11).

Part 3: DATA

Tax Returns with EITC

Nationwide during 2018, 25 million eligible workers and families received about \$63 billion in EITC. The average amount of EITC received nationwide was about \$2,488

State	Number of EITC Claims ¹	Total EITC Amount ¹	Average EITC Amount ¹
Alabama	471 K	\$1.3 B	\$2,841
Alaska	45 K	\$98 M	\$2,165
Arizona	548 K	\$1.4 B	\$2,165
Arkansas	281 K	\$757 M	\$2,697
California	2.8 M	\$6.6 B	\$2,364
Colorado	331 K	\$732 M	\$2,214
Connecticut	213 K	\$475 M	\$2,234
Delaware	71 K	\$171 M	\$2,401
District of Columbia	50 K	\$117 M	\$2,364
Florida	2.0 M	\$5.2 B	\$2,533
Georgia	1.0 M	\$2.9 B	\$2,807
Hawaii	94 K	\$206 M	\$2,187
Idaho	124 K	\$288 M	\$2,332
Illinois	932 K	\$2.3 B	\$2,517
Indiana	511 K	\$1.2 B	\$2,439
Iowa	195 K	\$451 M	\$2,306
Kansas	196 K	\$470 M	\$2,399
Kentucky	378 K	\$933 M	\$2,467
Louisiana	484 K	\$1.4 B	\$2,897
Maine	95 K	\$199 M	\$2,106
Maryland	388 K	\$914 M	\$2,356
Massachusetts	378 K	\$804 M	\$2,127
Michigan	746 K	\$1.9 B	\$2,523
Minnesota	316 K	\$702 M	\$2,220
Mississippi	357 K	\$1.0 B	\$2,927
Missouri	474 K	\$1.2 B	\$2,473
Montana	73 K	\$159 M	\$2,178
Nebraska	126 K	\$301 M	\$2,385
Nevada	247 K	\$609 M	\$2,466
New Hampshire	70 K	\$139 M	\$1,986
New Jersey	576 K	\$1.4 B	\$2,360
New Mexico	200 K	\$499 M	\$2,500
New York	1.6 M	\$3.9 B	\$2,355
North Carolina	883 K	\$2.2 B	\$2,531
North Dakota	42 K	\$91 M	\$2,171
Ohio	892 K	\$2.2 B	\$2,465
Oklahoma	319 K	\$823 M	\$2,581
Oregon	255 K	\$545 M	\$2,137
Pennsylvania	890 K	\$2.0 B	\$2,286

Rhode Island	79 K	\$183 M	\$2,316
South Carolina	463 K	\$1.2 B	\$2,602
South Dakota	59 K	\$133 M	\$2,261
Tennessee	604 K	\$1.6 B	\$2,573
Texas	2.5 M	\$7.0 B	\$2,773
Utah	176 K	\$411 M	\$2,332
Vermont	41 K	\$81 M	\$1,966
Virginia	578 K	\$1.4 B	\$2,365
Washington	407 K	\$893 M	\$2,194
West Virginia	145 K	\$343 M	\$2,368
Wisconsin	355 K	\$803 M	\$2,265
Wyoming	35 K	\$75 M	\$2,172
International	17 K	\$37 M	\$2,125

¹Source - Calendar Half Year Report, June 2018. Historically, half year data represents over 95 percent of EITC returns.

Source: <https://www.eitc.irs.gov/eitc-central/statistics-for-tax-returns-with-eitc/statistics-for-tax-returns-with-eitc>

Workers Impacted by Expanded EITC

Table depicts individuals in each state helped if age threshold for workers not raising kids at home is lowered to 21, and the maximum credit for this group is increased.

State	Workers Helped	State	Workers Helped
National	13,000,000	Missouri	252,000
Alabama	194,000	Montana	51,000
Alaska	38,000	Nebraska	107,000
Arizona	230,000	Nevada	107,000
Arkansas	118,000	New Hampshire	58,000
California	1,495,000	New Jersey	343,000
Colorado	202,000	New Mexico	90,000
Connecticut	140,000	New York	871,000
Delaware	35,000	North Carolina	369,000
District of Columbia	24,000	North Dakota	29,000
Florida	994,000	Ohio	502,000
Georgia	468,000	Oklahoma	145,000
Hawaii	58,000	Oregon	159,000
Idaho	64,000	Pennsylvania	554,000
Illinois	525,000	Rhode Island	46,000
Indiana	275,000	South Carolina	196,000
Iowa	120,000	South Dakota	37,000
Kansas	115,000	Tennessee	287,000
Kentucky	181,000	Texas	994,000
Louisiana	185,000	Utah	99,000
Maine	62,000	Vermont	32,000
Maryland	206,000	Virginia	304,000
Massachusetts	266,000	Washington	254,000
Michigan	459,000	West Virginia	81,000
Minnesota	220,000	Wisconsin	246,000
Mississippi	125,000	Wyoming	24,000

State figures rounded to nearest 1,000; national figures rounded to nearest 100,000. Based on 2017 incomes and law.

Source: U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Tax Analysis, "Expand the EITC for Workers Without Qualifying Children"

www.treasury.gov/resource-center/tax-policy/Documents/OTAR-State-Childless-EITC-Expansion-Proposal-2017.pdf

Free Tax Preparation Assistance Impact

About 380 United Ways fund, operate, or support VITA programs across the country. At these VITA sites, IRS certified volunteers help hardworking taxpayers to confidently file their taxes, and to claim any tax credits they have earned like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. See below for state by state impacts of the entire VITA program (not exclusive to United Way).

State	Total Returns Prepared	Returns with EITC	Total \$ brought back to local communities.
Alabama	27,982	7,509	\$39.4 million
Alaska	7,533	2,204	\$11.5 million
Arizona	41,020	11,304	\$65.4 million
Arkansas	13,726	3,888	\$18.9 million
California	177,082	51,568	\$263.7 million
Colorado	18,719	4,699	\$29.6 million
Connecticut	30,515	9,283	\$49.3 million
Delaware	6,988	2,555	\$12.2 million
District of Columbia	1,165	188	\$1.4 million
Florida	80,203	20,378	\$111.2 million
Georgia	30,223	7,505	\$43.3 million
Hawaii	7,108	1,616	\$11 million
Idaho	1,638	389	\$2.4 million
Illinois	25,101	6,297	\$33.1 million
Indiana	27,331	5,927	\$31.3 million
Iowa	15,383	4,605	\$23 million
Kansas	17,956	3,977	\$23.4 million
Kentucky	25,984	6,909	\$39.7 million
Louisiana	25,948	7,308	\$38.9 million
Maine	3,691	953	\$4.9 million
Maryland	22,888	6,145	\$30.1 million
Massachusetts	15,724	5,227	\$25.5 million
Michigan	41,065	9,890	\$40.3 million
Minnesota	21,050	7,341	\$32.1 million
Mississippi	14,592	4,875	\$25.4 million
Missouri	35,522	6,153	\$35.1 million
Montana	6,978	2,082	\$9.4 million
Nebraska	2,501	731	\$3.9 million
Nevada	8,015	1,879	\$11.2 million
New Hampshire	3,579	760	\$5.2 million
New Jersey	27,503	6,996	\$38.5 million
New Mexico	12,254	2,992	\$12.4 million
New York	103,588	29,946	\$150.3 million
North Carolina	38,487	7,570	\$51.6 million
North Dakota	2,005	834	\$3.9 million
Ohio	36,882	8,745	\$49.4 million
Oklahoma	16,566	4,402	\$23.1 million
Oregon	2,772	633	\$3.8 million

Pennsylvania	72,684	19,106	\$100.6 million
Rhode Island	9,833	12	\$15.7 million
South Carolina	30,975	3,290	\$36.7 million
South Dakota	4,260	7,599	\$8.6 million
Tennessee	25,024	1,342	\$36.7 million
Texas	132,057	6,199	\$235.2 million
Utah	17,004	39,003	\$25.8 million
Vermont	3,972	1,337	\$5.3 million
Virginia	33,361	7,779	\$47.5 million
Washington	24,816	5,858	\$43.1 million
West Virginia	9,607	2,187	\$13.2 million
Wisconsin	17,178	5,020	\$23 million
Wyoming	4,552	797	\$5.9 million
National*	1.3 million	362,457	\$1.96 billion

*National totals do not include data from Puerto Rico.

Data provided by Prosperity Now: <https://prosperitynow.org/>